

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881-5).¹

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118-9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40-3).

166
591
● 587 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long-established circulation of women from village to village.

[581]
¹ It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwanakuge—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early betrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage¹ is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.² Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,³ and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo⁴) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

¹ Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20-44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135-6.

² H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere before adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

³ MacKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

⁴ Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

835
304
595
582

[838]

587
835

[848]

- 587 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young
835 wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his step-mothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

583 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segregation
584 of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

621 In short, we argue that there is a connection between the existence
835 of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. Good company

577 The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is
621 matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*) between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

27. WIVES DRIVEN AWAY FOR WITCHCRAFT

Makwelebeja (elderly commoner).

'Many wives are driven away for witchcraft. They are driven away by their husbands. If a man has several wives one may be bad and throttle her husband's cattle, or throttle her husband himself. Then the man goes and complains (*ukwijaja*), saying: "They have destroyed my cattle", or perhaps, "My neighbours have 'eaten' me", whichever it is. When his fellows hear his complaints they say: "Do not accuse outsiders. See! It's your wife." Some women are bad and the husband does not sleep when he is with his other wives; only when he is with her (the witch) does he have a good sleep. She spoils the fertility of her co-wives. Or sometimes all the wives are friendly and agree to spoil the cattle of their husband.

754
627

'There is a woman named Kajonga whose husband drove her away for witchcraft because she bewitched the fertility of her co-wives. A long time after her divorce she was married to another man, Mwitoba by name. From that man also she was driven away for witchcraft, but what wrong she had done was not much known. Some time later she died.

754
627
587

'Women who are driven away for witchcraft always remarry; they do not run off with men.'

Njobakosa.

'When a wife was accused she drank *umwafi*. If she was "caught" by the ordeal sometimes her husband drove her away, sometimes he did not. Usually he did not.'

Nsusa.

'Formerly wives were frequently driven away for witchcraft. Such a wife remarried quickly.'

765 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is
184 your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be
765 prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the participants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by
768 the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the
587 inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is
[428] formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'on to the ashes' (*umfwandelo*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

43

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant⁷⁶⁵ raises the *akalulu*, the trill of applause and triumph¹ which is also⁷⁶⁸ the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection⁵⁸⁷ the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka! ubwite bwisile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gasping cough*.' Each of the inherited women goes off to⁷⁸³ her own father's homestead with the filth (*indafu*) of intercourse⁷⁶⁸ on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her⁵⁸⁷ cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is per-^[574] formed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingotolo*) and diarrhoea. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingotolo*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or⁵⁸⁷ brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son.⁸³⁴

¹ The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *akalulu* is raised by women.

Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

● 587 and the widower should refrain from sexual intercourse with his
834 other wives until the ritual union with the 'wife who replaces the dead' (*unsasi*) at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. Nowadays, however, widowers do not keep this taboo strictly, and many lie with their other wives after the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds'.

765 Before the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' for a dead woman her brother (or, if he is dead, his heir) goes to cut down the bananas at her former husband's home, as a sign that kinship between them is at an end, but he is persuaded to desist. Mwakwelebeja, an elderly man who had just performed it after the death of his sister Seba, the wife of the chief Mwaipopo, in company with his neighbour Mwaiselage and his wives, thus described the ritual:

We arrived and our wives and the wives of Mwaipopo went into the house to wail, and we men went in too and cried: 'Alas father! Alas father!' Then we seized my *umwipwa*, the girl Ijonga, the daughter of Seba, and went off with her. The women, the chief's wives, fought with us and cried: 'Bring a cloth, bring a cloth!' They gave us a cloth and we left the girl. Then I seized a bill-hook and began to cut down the banana grove. I cut indeed! They cried: 'Not the banana grove!' and gave me another cloth.

QUESTION: What does this mean?

MWAKWELEBEJA: When we seize the girl it is as if we said: 'My child has died, the kinship is finished, it is finished here, I'll be off with my sister's children (*abipwa*), they are my children.' And when they give me a cloth they pay saying: 'Father, we pray you, don't! There is still kinship, Father, you are not a stranger! Do not terminate the kinship, it is still there.' And when I cut the banana grove it means the same; it means my child has died here, it is finished here, the kinship has ended. And when they give me a cloth, they beseech me saying: 'Not the banana grove, Father, the kinship is not yet finished, it still exists!' Formerly, if they were rich they gave a bull. . . . We were unfortunate, Mwaipopo paid us nothing.

After I had cut the grove I gave bananas and meat (from a cow I had brought to kill) to all my sisters' children, on the roadway (outside the homestead). I stood with my back to them and handed the bananas and meat over my shoulder. They came up behind me one by one, and took the food in their mouths. [This was demonstrated, dramatically.] Yes, it is a ritual. If we do not give them bananas and meat, their legs swell up, they fall ill and become mad.

765 Some of our informants maintained that this ritual of cutting
184 the bananas was performed only when the deceased's family had no girl to send in her place. Mwakwelebeja and Mwaiselage, how-

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

45

ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to⁷⁶⁵
send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it¹⁸⁴
was carried out only for the eldest of them.

We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but
we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to
Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the
bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaiselage explained that his brother-in-law would come to⁷⁶⁵
cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she
died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the
brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister.

MWAKWELEBEJA: We cut the banana grove again when all the
children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are
dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (*untani*) does it, for their
mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The
kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her⁵⁸⁷
husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: ⁷⁶⁵

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her rela-
tives, my *abipwa*, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth
crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they
do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after
me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If
there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibaso and Mwaijamba explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to
replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here,
this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the
cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we
divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to
me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not ^[602]
come to an end.

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the⁷⁶⁵
formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man);⁷⁶⁸
the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth
from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain
seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; circling the hearth and
putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation
of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second

764 prepared earlier) and ties a strip of medicated banana bark round the neck of each, and with these necklaces on they must sleep. In one lineage they take little horns and blow into them and walk round calling out: 'We are driving you away, you are a stranger to us, do not come in dreams repeatedly.'

Next morning sausages of millet porridge mixed with medicine are half-buried in the earth at the cross-roads—or somewhere on the pathway—and each participant in turn bends down and bites off a piece, leaving some in the ground. They take off their bark necklaces and throw them into the little hut, which is then destroyed. After they have bathed again the officiant strokes each one on the forehead with a razor.

768 When a married man has died the heir is formally recognized, 587 and the widows are asked whether they accept him as their husband, at some point during the ritual; when Mwaikambo's father died the recognition of the heir preceded the whole ritual; more often it follows it and there is a formal drinking of 'the beer of inheritance'. In any case the first intercourse between the heir and the widows is always delayed for some months and, until it has taken place, the widows may meet their relatives; after it each widow returns to the homestead of her father (or his heir) for the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*). Old Fibombe, a Christian elder, described it vividly:

768 The parents of the girl brew beer and call her to the beer of *ingotolo*. 177 They also call their relatives. She brings a hoe or a goat (or now a cloth 587 or is.). First of all she lifts up the pot of beer into which an officiant has put powdered medicine (*imbondanya*) and takes a mouthful, stirring the rest, then she hands it to another participant and when he has taken a mouthful she spits out, then she stirs and hands it on, and when the next has taken a mouthful she spits, and so it continues until all present have done this. Nowadays people do not take the beer in their mouths, they simply stir and pass it on. Pride prevents them. They say people will laugh at them if they do the things of old. Time is passing and things are like *Mambo Leo* [the Swahili newspaper] now. All [184] pagans, however, still do this ritual in a modified form, only the Christians leave it undone.

768 This informant omitted two significant points in the ritual 587 which we saw for ourselves: the widow brings a spear belonging to her new husband and thrusts it into the earth outside her father's house. It stands beside the vessel of beer while her kinsmen drink until her brother plucks it out and takes it into the

Nyakyusa

Kukwe

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

67

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the loft¹ and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is killed and eaten at the ritual. [556]

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all relations with her kin. [586] [777] [684]

(b) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions. [115]

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated by him soon afterwards.) [58]

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious [58] [757]

¹ The loft (*pijula*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. [422] [417]

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?

773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhoea to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (vide p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:¹ The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
 • 587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
 [188] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

¹ Referring to the *ingotolo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

75

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*nsito*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill. 764 587 ●

MWANGWANDA: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. [753] *Ingotolo* is an illness.

ii. *Kakune's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

KAKUNE: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. 764 They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is these of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.' [58]

QUESTION: Why the first washing?

KAKUNE: That is to get rid of the disease, the filth, for they held the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

QUESTION: Why the eating of porridge?

KAKUNE: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

QUESTION: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the evening?

KAKUNE: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*unganga*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with powdered medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father hoed. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never hoe for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you hoe plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing. [789]

QUESTION: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

KAKUNE: The ointment (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukalende*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kakune's family they do not cry the war shout of triumph, they only dance to the harp.] [84]

QUESTION: Why the pebbles? [I told him what Mwasalemba had said and he agreed heartily.]

KAKUNE: Yes, that's it! We throw them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

764 porridge—sausages of porridge are buried in the ground and bitten off by the principals who stoop down to do it.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

KAKUNE: It means that we are about to honour them; they eat, and he whom we have buried also remains below, he also eats, we bury the sausage in the earth and we say we are burying him also, then he will fear to come to the house.

QUESTION: And this porridge is a symbol of the filth which those who run mad eat?

KAKUNE (laughing): Yes, because if we omit to do these things the children become feeble, their hearts say 'He! he!' [panting and excited] and they rush off to the road and eat dirt (*imindo*).

QUESTION: Why should the shades do this to them? How are they interested in dirt (*imindo*)?

KAKUNE: I don't know. We say it is because we have not accompanied them on the road and on account of this the shade is very angry and says: 'We shall see whether their children flourish!' He has bewitched them (*abalogile*).

QUESTION: And what about the circling round with the harp and the trampling at the fire?

KAKUNE: That is not very important, Mwaipaja [G. W.], it is because he cultivated food and danced at beer drinks when he was alive, so we dance for him now that he is dead. . . . A widow must lie with her husband the night before she comes to do the (*ingotolo*) ritual, and she comes with his filth on her, she does not wash. If she comes without having lain with him the night before then we all get the disease. The disease comes from the new husband, it comes from his seed, the seed that begets us men. When his seed enters her womb then she is heavy (*nsito*) and if she eats or drinks out of our dishes and pots while we are empty (*bwasi*), before we have stopped ourselves with medicines, then she gives us the disease. She has not given us the protective medicine (*imbosyo*).

764 If a woman changes from one husband to another and both are
753 alive, there is no danger and no ritual. It is death that brings the danger, because that man [her first husband] has died; he has died and rotted below, and from that disease comes. The disease only comes from this situation. If no relative has died there is no *ingotolo*. But if my wife has run off with another man and then comes back to me with his semen in her, then I take some powdered medicine and eat some and throw a little on the fire, and if I do not do this then my legs will hurt, I shall be unable to walk properly, and my body will become weak. Neither she nor her relatives take medicine, nor does her new husband, if she goes to him and he pays for her and takes her. He just marries her.

764 If the widow is left with a sucking child and is empty [*bwasi*: i.e. her
587

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

79

new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she⁷⁶⁴ lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves⁵⁸⁷ the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of⁷⁶⁴ *ingotolo* falls sick of it afterwards, never.⁷⁵³

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of⁵⁸⁷ her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is⁶⁰² a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you¹ have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a⁷⁶⁴ song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. Evidence of other informants

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run/⁵⁸ mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that⁸²⁸ man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

¹ It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

Husband & Wife 65

593
422 refuses point blank to feed his visitors, he appeals to another; but it will be obvious that continued churlishness on the part of a wife would lead to trouble. Bananas, rice, and malesi belong to the husband; bananas, because he alone attends to them; rice, because it came from the Europeans; and malesi, because from this cereal beer is made, and the husband is lord of the beer pot once the beer is brewed. Fowls belong to the wife, but though the profits of sale are hers, she usually lays them out in small household necessities, such as salt. She often gets a cow from her father, and her husband may make her a similar gift; and he must not use the milk without her consent, though if it is sold, the money is laid by to pay the tax. All household utensils are hers, except the small dish from which her husband eats; but she leaves everything behind should she be divorced, except the cow she received from her father.

587
765 If a wife dies while still capable of child-bearing, her father must give another daughter to the widower; or, if he has none, a cow, dressed with flowers, is sent with an apology, and a promise that as soon as possible the dowry cattle will be returned. If the father hopes that another daughter may yet be born to him, an arrangement may be come to by which she will go to the widower. Widows become the "family" of the heir. They wear anklets of cow-skin, and let their hair grow, mixing it with clay. These signs of mourning they wear for about a year. Girls wear similar tokens of mourning if either parent is dead, but not boys.

Death & Burial

295

which killed the man passing over to those present at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups. The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to cut him off from all connection with earthly matters. His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his wives build themselves huts in which they live for a year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man"; after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.) The dead man has been dissociated from the living: the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off the dead man from the living, that by destroying his goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another member of the family will die soon. The most effective way of despatching him to his proper abode is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second death in the family is due to the reluctance of the first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

NORTH NYASA REGION

83

584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.¹

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle.

586 Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.² Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.³ Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.⁴ If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.⁵

● 587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a
768 man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.⁶

INHERITANCE

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.⁷ This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.⁸ The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.⁹ The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinmen are dead or are infants.¹⁰

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female tide, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

¹ Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257-9.

² Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.

³ Ibid., p. 43.

⁴ Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264-6; Sanderson, 3, 1902, p. 453.

⁵ Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 26; Johnson, 1897, p. 471.

⁶ Mackenzie, 1925, p. 53.

⁷ Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.

⁸ Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.

⁹ Conhead, 1914, p. 45.

¹⁰ Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

THE LAND RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS AMONG THE NYAKYUSA 27

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless¹ children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her.

592
857
241

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the man and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In ten neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the man and his sons worked always together. Meals followed the same pattern as the hoeing. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

This variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of hoeing separately, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the slackness of their husband in hoeing. If he is slack about hoeing then it falls to the women to organize it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in that case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (rewarding their efforts with food at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he complains that while his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of hoeing together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the man, who himself organizes it. And whenever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is slack that the custom of hoeing separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the man is vigorous in hoeing his wives are never reluctant and ungenerous about cooking, they bow to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife, if a son he takes

768
587

¹The custom of marrying two sisters and that of substituting a dead woman's sister or niece in her place considerably reduces the number of such "motherless" children, for the sister of a dead woman treats the latter's children as her own.

768 all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance
587 and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother¹. Inherited wives have the
[42] same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes
is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-
in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of
hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on
her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members,
476 other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually
invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing
two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the
work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women
friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reap-
ing of her crops and then she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in
the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married
woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a
month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to
464 decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time
except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households
young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month
in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment
in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their
fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before
them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to
any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where
ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable
profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

241 Kinamen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When
592 a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of
602 father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the
606 marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by
his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to
bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and
they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the
marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are enter-
tained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

¹ And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

his wife is called *nkasi*, like the wife of a "brother," not *nkogho*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "grandmothers." (See para. 5.)

Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ndume*, and his wife *nkasi-mwinangu*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *nkasi* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ndume* by a woman: the term *mwisukulu-mwinangu* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *nkasi* and *ndume* respectively, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable: since a "grandchild" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

- (5) All "grandmothers" are termed *nkasi*, except perhaps the sisters of the paternal grandfather; some say that these should be classed as "sister," as the sister of one's *mwinangu* (grandfather), because *nkasi* would not be polite to the *nasenge* of one's father. Others deny this and include all grandmothers as *nkasi*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "grandmothers" of a wife.

A man often has to marry his "grandmothers" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "grandmothers" if they are destitute.

A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ndume*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "grandmother," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ndume* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as incestuous is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwisukulu* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*ndeye*), but it is now obsolete.

- (6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwisipus*). A man calls the wife of his

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

207

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and